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HELPING CHILDREN FIND A HOME THAT OFFERS SAFETY, STABILITY, AND LOVE

A project based upon an independent investigation, submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts in Social Work

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Helping children find a home that
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ABSTRACT

The researcher wanted to look closely to see if preferences of adoptive parents, such as a particular race, age, or gender of the adoptee, helped or hindered the process of adoption. Gathering research, based on previous studies, the researcher was able to compare and contrast, to see if there are any patterns regarding adoptive parent preferences. There was a hole in the literature in regards to the preference of gender. This was a quantitative descriptive study completed by Providence College students, using a Likert-like style instrument. The main findings in the research was the statistically significant relationship of the values of the variable race and age, based on their preference of an adoptee. Implications for further research, would be that more studies should be done to identify other variables affecting the decline in adoption, and ways to successfully move forward from this decline.

According to Brumble & Kampfe, adoption is a legal procedure that provides a permanent home and family for a child whose biological parents are unable, unwilling, or legally prohibited from keeping the child (2011). Adoption provides stability, certainty, security, and love which are essential for abused and neglected children in foster care (Gove, 2012). When handled properly, in Rhode Island, there are several agencies in place that help provide programs and services for adoptive children to ensure that they are receiving adequate care in their home and their everyday life (Johnson, 2013). Children are sometimes placed in homes that their needs are not always met. Adoption can help provide children with a steady environment, access to better schooling, and their daily necessities. In 2000, The United States Census Bureau gave the first look at actual numbers of adoptees, and found that there was 2.1 million adoptees reported in households (Brumble & Kampfe, p. 157, 2011). This figure was able to show that stability, certainty, security, and love was provided for 2.1 million children.

With 2.1 million adoptees in the United States as of 2000, this displayed that the number of people affected by adoption in the United States was increasing (Brumble & Kampfe, p. 161, 2011). With the number of adoptees greatly increasing, this meant that children were being bounced from home to home and not being adopted. The longer children stayed in the system, they became more and more broken. While there are many potential benefits, the country has seen a disturbing and recent decline in adoption rates. Indeed, according to Grove, adoptions has fallen 17 percent and becomes a problem if children are not found a home quickly (2012). This statistic does not bode well. According to one study, the lack of adoption for children begins to take an emotional and psychologically toll on them. "Neglect will have arrested their cognitive development; abuse will have made it more difficult for them to form secure relationships; the

fatal mix of the two will have harmed them emotionally, intellectually, socially, and personally” (Gove, p. 108, 2012). This quote, clearly shows the negative effects on a child not being adopted.

So, clearly the decline in adoption is a concern. The bureaucratic process, people adopting overseas, and selectivity of adoptive parents all play part in the decline. The bureaucratic process involved in the adoption process has discouraged families from possibly adopting. The flaws, length, and confusion of the assessment system for adoptive parents has affected the vast supply of possible adoptive candidates (Gove, p. 110, 2012). If the assessment plan addressed these minor setbacks, the process of finding a child a home can be less time consuming. Due to the lack of availability of children of certain preferences, families have turned to adoption elsewhere. International adoption has been proven to have better benefits and costs, availability of infants for adoption, shorter waiting period to adopt, and racially-matched adoptions (Hollingsworth & Ruffin, 2002). This in the eyes of adoptive parents is more marketable for them. Another contributing factor is selectivity of particular race, age, and gender. This selectivity of race, age, and gender causes children in the United States to go un-adopted. Preferences regarding race, age, and gender of adoptive parents, usually are the preferences of children they would want, but possibly could not have due to certain circumstances.

“Six of every ten Americans have either adopted a child, been adopted themselves, placed a child in adoption or had a family member or close friend who is adopted” (Bordo, p. 231, 2005). This statement clearly signifies the importance and prevalence of adoption. Social workers can step in and make a difference in the bureaucratic process, adopting overseas, and address the issue of race, age, and gender preferences regarding adoption. It is also important for social workers to understand the psychological selectivity among adoptive parents. Once they are

aware of this, they could help to counsel families to make them aware of the gain and reward by providing greater service to a child that has less of likelihood to be adopted because he/she may not be of a particular preference of adoptive parents. Social workers can be the support system that children and families of adoption and being there for them during their adjustment period. A system needs to be in place that works for all children, despite where they live and also a system that is quick, effective, and robust (Gove, 2012). Researchers has not yet taken a close look at preferences or attitudes of coming generation of adoptive parents to help reduce the decline, and make a difference for children in need.

Literature Review

There have been various studies done on adoption as early as the 1940's to present day. Over the past decade, researchers have noticed a decline in adoption. Numerous studies have been conducted to answer the question, why? Researchers looked closely to see if preferences of adoptive parents, helped or hindered the process of adoption. Gathering research, based on previous studies, the researcher will be able to compare and contrast, to see if there are any patterns regarding adoptive parent preferences. Not having access to adoptive population, previous research will be useful to shape our understanding of this legal procedure. Preferences such as race, age, and gender will allow the researcher to see if these preferences play a part in the decline of adoption.

HISTORY

Where it all began

The history of adoption plays a great role in the decline. Being able to compare past to current adoptions, will help to understand where it all began. After World War II, majority of orphaned children, were from Germany and Greece (Brumble & Kampfe, 2011). Many children

during/after World War II became orphans because their parents died fighting in the war. During this time period this was when Americans first began to show a great interest in intercountry adoption (Brumble & Kampfe, 2011). Interest in international adoption was always evident in the United States from as early as the Colonial Times. According to Brumble & Kampfe, Americans saw international adoption as a solution for the result of all the parentless children (2011). The first to have an interest in international adoption was the soldiers, due to the first hand devastation that they witnessed overseas (Brumble & Kampfe, 2011). As early as the Colonial Times, Americans were there to help children receive stability, certainty, security, and love which are essential for abused and neglected children in society today (Gove, 2012).

RACE

Finding a race of your own

Previous research has been able to show how the preference of race has greatly affected adoptees drastically. Researchers were able to analyze which race was preferred, the effects of transracial adoption, and also the reaction of parents of different races of the adoptee. Research shows that due to the overrepresentation of children of color, they are more vulnerable to need of adoption. "Most of the children awaiting adoption in the nation's public child welfare agencies are African American" (Roberts, p. 42, 2006). Why are 35% of children of color awaiting adoption you ask? Poverty and foster care placement has shown to have a large impact on this statistic (Hollingsworth, 1998). According to one study, races living in poverty is one circumstance, which directly affects children of color (Hollingsworth, 1998). Living in poverty you are not able to provide the everyday essentials for your children. Not providing for the everyday essentials because lack of income, cause children of color in poverty to go without and become neglected. "Children of single parents had a 87 percent greater risk of being harmed by

physical neglect and an 80 percent greater risk of suffering serious injury or harm from abuse and neglect” (Hollingsworth, 1998). Since single parents in order for adequate income, they are working multiple jobs at a time, children of color living in poverty are required to grow up fast and learn to raise themselves. Children raising themselves does not always go well, causing children to end up in child welfare agencies. “Poverty itself creates dangers for children—poor nutrition, serious health problems, hazardous housing, inadequate heat and utilities, neighborhood crime; indigent parents do not have the resources wealthier parents have to avoid the harmful effects of their negligence, nor can they afford to pay professionals to cover up their mistakes” (Roberts, p. 44, 2006). Addressing the issue of poverty for black families will help to decline the overpopulation of black children being overrepresented in child welfare agencies. To this day there is still a persistent and striking gap in the economic status of Blacks and Whites that show up in unemployment, poverty, and income (Roberts, 2006).

The National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) and the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 were first to address the issue of transracial adoption. Both groups presented the issue of transracial in either a negative or positive way. NABSW was in place after the rise of transracial adoptions due to World War II and the decline of healthy white infants. World War II, caused a new widespread of races of children to be up for adoption (Brumble & Kampfe, 2011). Due to the decline of healthy white infants, because of the spread in 1960’s of the use of artificial birth control, they were no longer available for adoption (Hollingsworth, 1998). The decline of healthy white infants, African Americans were now being adopted; this was the start of the increase of transracial adoptions. Transracial adoption was first due to the aftermath of the war, and was now due to the availability of race, and was later changed. In 1972, NABSW, wanted to put a stop to transracial adoptions. They felt as though black children

belonged physically, psychologically, and culturally in black families, where they would be able to receive the total sense of themselves (Hollingsworth, 1998). NABSW, felt as though a white family would cut them off from the healthy development of themselves as black people (McRoy, p. 150, 1989). The NABSW had a negative effect on transracial adoptions, and caused colored children to go without homes because the lack of adequate same race families to adopt. This study was able to show the switch in the need for transracial adoption. Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994, was able to shine the light on transracial adoption, and prohibit denial of any child of a different race from that of their foster care placement or adoptive parents. According to Roberts, the Act prohibited “categorically denying to any person the opportunity to become an adoptive or foster parent, solely on the basis of the race, color, or national origin of the adoptive or foster parents involved” (1998). This Act wanted to ensure that all adoptees had equal chance of being adopted and not have any discriminating factors to complicate them from finding homes. This Act was also able to help to positively increase transracial adoption again and provide improvements to focus on finding homes for adoptees (Hollingsworth, 1998). Although it might be a learning experience for transracial adoptions with patience, adequate services, and resources transracial families will be able to adopt and provide black children with the physical, psychological, and culture they need to develop sufficiently.

The effect of transracial adoption on adoptive parents was surprising to see that it was based on mixed race parentage or if there were two parents of the same ethnic background (Moffatt & Thoburn, 2001). Despite NABSW stating the inadequacy of adoptive parents of transracial adoptees, another study found that this was no longer the case. A qualitative and quantitative data done in 2001, concluded that some white families can successfully parent children of different ethnic origin (Moffatt & Thoburn). Parents were now able to utilize the

resources available to them to ensure that their adoptee was supported and cared for. Ensuring that their adoptee was supported and cared for would help foster their needs and help them to quickly adjust in their new environment. Unfortunately, the opposite was not true for parents of minority ethnic origin. Adoptive parents of color, found that adopting white children they had to take additional tasks to negotiate and parent a child who has already suffered adversity and at least one separation and rejection in their life (Moffatt & Thoburn, 2001). Further research needs to be done to answer the question, why. Additional support and help, should also be given to these adoptive families who are willing to adopt, but needs the empowerment when faced with these challenges. No matter the race of adoptive parents, they need to help them combat the adverse effects of racism and ensure that they feel pride in their appearance, culture, and heritage (Moffatt & Thoburn, 2001).

What are the benefits to elude transracial adoption? Since preference of race has become prevalent now, a decline in transracial adoption has occurred. “Early adoption standards called for matching children by race with their adoptive parents” (Alstein & Simon, 2000). Adoptive parents found that seeking races similar to that of the adoptees was easier for them. Based on availability, adoptive parents found it easier to ethnically match their adoptee. In search of seeking other alternatives for same-race children, families turned to international adoption verses domestic adoption. Although there is a demand for adoptees in the United States, Americans continue to seek children from other countries outside of the United States (Brumble & Kampfe, 2011). Some might ask why not help children in the United States find safety, security, and stability, before helping internationally; several studies was able to answer why. “International adoptions by U.S. families for government fiscal year 1999 totaled \$16,396, an almost 4% increase over the 15,774 international adoptions in 1998” (Hollingsworth & Ruffin, 2002). Due

to the rise in international adoption, this clearly affected the decline in adoption causing the number of children in foster care system available to rapidly grow (Hollingsworth & Ruffin, 2002). Families found that the child they always had in mind would be more accessible internationally. In 1996, compared to African countries and Asian countries 8% of East European children were internationally adopted, due to the fact that East Europe children were white (Hollingsworth & Ruffin, 2002). This allowed families the opportunity to adopt the same race. Although some families wanted adoptees of the same race, and despite the early adoption standards, they have now become opened to the idea of transracial adoption due to the overrepresentation of children of color in the welfare agencies.

In spite of the research showing that with the overrepresentation of children of color, and the lack of families of color to adopt them, adoptive parents need to see the reward and greater service to help a child who may be less likely to be adopted because of same-race adoption preference. Although the process of transracial adoption may be difficult for adoptive parents, adoptive parents “especially whose race or country of origin is different from their own, they have a special responsibility to make it happen (Bordo, 2005). The lack of black adoptive families providing home for adoptees need to be met. Barriers that are in place that have been preventing or discouraging families of color from adopting, need to be broken down (Hollingsworth, 1998). There needs to be an increase and availability for not only family of color, but white family adoptive parents to help these adoptees find homes.

AGE

Preference for the young

Research was able to show that age preference for adoptive parents, was an important factor as well. Age at time of placement and availability of infants for adoption would have an

effect on adoptive parents. Age became prevalent in adoptee, due to the concurrent efforts to place foster children with adoptive parents while trying to reunite them with their families (Roberts, 2006). This process, in itself takes time and dedication. Since the time span to place a foster child in a home, is a long process, the child becomes older during this process which makes it harder for them to find foster or adoptive parents. Research was able to prove that the older the child was at age of adoption, the more likely a great deal of behavioral issues the child would display (Feng, Harwood & Yu, 2013). The study done by Feng, Harwood, and Yu, was able to show that adoption after the age of 6 months, was a marker for increase behavior problems (2013). This also were able to find that children adopted before the age of 12 months, were more likely to catch up completely, compared to children who were adopted at a later age (Feng, Harwood & Yu, 2013). Children after 12 months or school-aged would have more than likely established a bond with his/her parents, and become more aware of the foster care system. Being aware of the foster system and what it entails, they may begin to act out, in hopes that they will be placed back in the home, if no one could handle their behavior. The older the child gets, “more serious behavior and attention problems occur and leads into adolescence” (Hawk & McCall, 2011). An adoptive parent, especially a first time adoptive parent, would want to stay away from an adoptee with behavioral problems. An adoptee having behavioral problems, is another strike against them, which complicates from them finding a safe and stable home.

Adoptive parents again turned to internationally adopting, when it came to the preference of age. Adoptive parents seek available infants for adoption. Statistically, “of the children adopted from other countries by U.S. families in 1997, 47% were under one year when adopted, 41% were between 1 and 4 years, and only 12% were 5 years old and over” (Hollingsworth & Ruffin, 2002). These statistics clearly show that availability for the age preference of adoptive

parents. When compared to the domestic adoption, “in 1997, only 2% were less than 1 year, 44% were between 1 and 5 years, while 54% were 6 years-old or over” (Hollingsworth & Ruffin, 2002). When comparing the two, domestic adoption lacks infants, which is an important aspect for adoptive parents. Adoptive parents prefer infants because infants can grow with them. Infants will be able to know their adoptive parents as close as if they were their birth parents; which can make a great difference to an adoptive parent. Adoptive parents just wanting a certain age preference, again will complicate for finding homes for those who do not fit the age criteria.

GENDER

Boys become more difficult to adopt than girls

Preference of gender was another factor that played a role in the choice of adoptive parents. Research was able to show that adoptive parents did not have a particular preference in regards to gender of the adoptee. The only information that the researcher found was gender in regards to adoptive placement. Studies found different reactions between boys and girls in their new family placement. “Boys were more likely to experience behavioral difficulties and to be found in clinical populations” (Maffatt & Thoburn, 2001). Certain ethnic backgrounds found boys difficult to deal with, and girls had a more open communication pattern of expressing their opinions and talking about their difficulties (Maffatt & Thoburn, 2001). Girls talking more about their difficulties and troubles they may be going through, will allow them to feel more comfortable and open up to their adoptive parents; whereas boys did not want to express their feelings. Boys not expressing their feelings verbally, caused them to act out, which made it difficult for the adoptive parents to deal with their behaviors. “If boys are at increased risk when placed in matched families, is it important to learn more about why this might be the case and to take appropriate steps to support the boys and their parents” (Maffatt & Thoburn, 2001).

Based on the research it is clear to see that adoption has come a long way. With preferences in regards to race, age, and gender of an adoptee, complicates the process for them finding stability, certainty, security, and love. The researchers were able to point out all the positive and negative influences for adoptive parents who just make their choice of adoptee of a certain race, age, and gender. The research was able to conclude the effect that race, age, and gender has on the decline of adoption, and increase in children available for adoption. Although there might be other factors that are impacting the decline, but preferences of adoptees has therefore been proven to be foremost important in the decline of adoption. A further investigation between the relationship with adoption and preferences of adoptees will seem necessary to conduct. The researcher plans to get a snapshot of the view of adoption preferences among college students to see if their current view of adoptee preferences, will affect his/her view in the future if having to face adoption of their own. Some of the other factors that have not been studied in detail are bureaucratic process as well as the convenience of international verses domestic adoption. Delightfully said by Bordo, our children are separate beings whom we must get to know, and learn to love for who they are; whether they've grown in our wombs, come to us from another country, look just like us or nothing like us, we all have to adopt our children (2005).

Hypothesis

It is clear that adoption has changed over the years especially in regards to race, age, and gender of an adoptee. Research has pointed to the positive and negative influences for adoptive parents who choose their adoptee by certain race, age, and gender concluding the effect the effect that race, age, and gender had on the decline of adoption rates, and increase in children available for adoption (Feng, Harwood & Yu, 2013; Hollingsworth & Ruffin, 2002; Maffatt & Thoburn,

2001; Roberts, 2006). Preferences of adoptees has therefore been shown to be foremost important in the decline of adoption (Feng, Harwood & Yu, 2013; Hollingsworth & Ruffin, 2002; Maffatt & Thoburn, 2001; Roberts, 2006). Further investigation between the relationship with adoption and preferences of adoptees seems necessary to conduct. The researcher plans to survey college students to get a snapshot of their view on adoption preferences, despite them not being faced with this decision at the time. The researcher finds that college students will allow them to gain insight on the current generation, and see what their current preference in regards to adoption is, and their possible openness to change their adoption preferences in the future.

Methodology

This is a relational study of adoption preferences among college students, and their openness to change their adoption preferences in the future.

A. Sample

A convenience sample of a 100 Providence College students, were used to assess adoption preferences. The researcher used Providence College peers because they were an adequate sampling group. The researcher surveyed 84 females, and 16 males on the Providence College campus. Students were selected by sample of convenience, so there was a variety of freshman, sophomores, juniors, and seniors sampled. Prior to students completing the survey, the researcher ensured that the students sampled, would pick the best option that was appealing to them, despite their interest in having or not having children in the future. Of the students surveyed, there was a range of 17 majors. Of the 17 majors, Business was the largest student group sampled. Of the 100 students surveyed, 73 were Caucasian, 22 African American, 4 Hispanic, and 1 Asian. Based on the sample the researcher found that 41% of the students were somewhat likely to adopt domestically, 38% was somewhat likely to adopt a female child verses a male, 56% likely to

adopt a newborn, 38% likely to consider age, 39% likely to adopt a child that was the same race as their own, 34% were interested in adopting a Caucasian child, 40% felt as though Asians were most likely to be adopted, and 39% were likely to change their adoptee preference, if their original preference was not available. Gaining knowledge of the race, gender, major, age, and adoption preference of the participants, was usefully in the sample for the researcher to determine relationships among the variables.

B. Variables

The dependent variable in the study is preferences of adoption. Preferences of adoption in the study is the choice/likings one can select in regards to adoption. Race, age, and gender are values of the variable , which were used to choose your preference of adoption. The students sampled chose their preference of adoption based on a questionnaire that consisted of Likert-like scale questions. The validity of variables was assessed by the operational and conceptual definition, and when ten individual experts were asked to assess, the overall validity was sound.

The independent variable in the study is an individual's perception of the adoptee. An individual's perception of the adoptee is the personal feelings/opinion towards a possible adoptee that is appealing to them. An individual's perception was measured by handing out a survey, and the researcher received their self-reported answers based on their personal feelings/opinions towards a possible adoptee. The validity of variables was assessed by the operational and conceptual definition, and when ten individual experts were asked to assess, the overall validity was sound.

C. Data Collection

The researcher gathered data among Providence College student population. The researcher distributed a paper copy of a survey. The survey was distributed to diverse Providence College participants of different class years, majors, age, and gender. The survey consisted on a questionnaire of 16 Likert-like scale questions. Once the researcher sampled 100 participants, the researcher then entered the data found into SPSS Data Sheet. SPSS Data Sheet was able to formulate each question into a frequency and percent for the researcher to easily evaluate. SPSS also allowed for the researcher to gain statistics on an individual's perception of the adoptee, and the preferences of adoption.

D. Data Analysis/Internal Validity

The researcher was able to derive meaning from the information gathered about adoption to see if Providence College student preferences might indicate the direction of future adoption rates. With the data gathered from the participants, the researcher used the nominal level of measurement to determine a relationship between the two variables. The researcher then used the statistical procedure chi square, cross tables, and frequency tables for the nominal level of measurement. The researcher found that there was a statistical significant relationships of less than .05 between the variables. The chi square, cross tables, and frequency tables helped provide the researcher with a visual and the exact breakdown of the students surveyed, and what their preferences were. The statistical procedure also helped the researcher when evaluating the original thesis, and to determine what next steps should be made to better address the issue of adoption. The researcher found certain frequency tables such as How likely are you to adopt a female child, How likely is age a factor when considering adoption, What age group do you think is most likely to be adopted, What age group would you prefer to adopt, What race would

you be interested in adopting, and How likely are you to change your preference of adoptee, if your original preference wasn't available, useful in reporting the findings (See Appendix).

E. External Validity

Based on the results of the study, the researcher recognizes that additional research is necessary to support the findings of this study. In order to increase external validity, additional research on the same variables, with different samples is warranted.

Implications

The researcher was able to draw conclusions about adoption after collecting data among 100 Providence College students. The researcher found that preferences such as age and race, were highly considered when choosing an adoptee. There was a statistically significant relationship between the prospective adoptive parents, and the age, and race of the adoptee. The researcher did not find much of a relationship with gender among the Providence College students. Based on the age of the participants completing the survey, they were more concerned for the race, and age of an adoptee, not what gender the adoptee would be; which the researcher found surprising. The researcher also found other important findings when analyzing the data that was useful to better understand the adoption process, such as international vs. domestic adoption, their openness to change their adoption preference, and their likeliness to consider adoption in the future.

Sampling the Providence College community, helped gain a snapshot of adoption in the eyes of the upcoming generation, and help seek ways to break the cycle of children left without a family. Providence College students were able to provide their responses based on what option was appealing to them despite his/her not having an interest in having children in the future. The

researcher was studying to see if one's preference of the adoptee, based on certain race, age, and gender of their choice, did have an effect on the decline of adoption. The researcher was also looking for relationships among these three variables. The Providence College population, helped the researcher see what race, age, and gender fell through the cracks. Knowing what population of race, age, and gender was affected, the researcher could help develop next steps for these adoptees. Following through with these next steps, could help restore a child's sense of care, love, security, and stability in their home.

The researcher hypothesized that Providence College students who complete the Likert-like survey questions, would choose an adoptee that is the same race or similar, to their own race, they would also choose an adoptee who is a newborn, and also an adoptee that is the same gender as their own. After the information was generated into SPSS, the researcher was able to analyze the data. The researcher found that the hypothesis was supported in regards to race and age. Student's response to gender varied, and there was no statistical relationship found among this value of the variable. The researcher found that students did not have a preference when it came to gender, they were just interested in adopting a child. There was a statistically significant relationship of .000 (less than .05) between "What race are you, and what race would you be interested in adopting?" Of the 73 Caucasian Providence College students who took the survey, when asked what race they would be interested in adopting, 45.2% of them chose Caucasian, which was the highest percent within that race. Of the 22 African American students surveyed, 50% of them responded that they would be interested in adopting an African American child; 4 Hispanic students surveyed, 75% expressed their interest in adopting a Hispanic child; and for the 1 Asian American who took the survey, they were interested in adopting an Asian child. Based on the percentages, and conversations that followed, it was clear that students felt as

though they were more comfortable adopting a race of their own. One student stated, “It would be easier to raise an adopted child that is the same race as my own”. The student also made it clear, that it is not that they did not have an interest in the possibility of adopting another race, but their preference would likely be to choose to adopt a child that is the same race as themselves. Another student stated, “Teaching the culture would be difficult to a child that is not the same race as me; I feel as though it would make it difficult for them to grow in a family that has completely different values and cultures different from them, this would definitely make them feel uncomfortable”. Despite the students surveyed that was just interested in adopting a race of their own, there was 44.6% of students who expressed an interest in adopting, multiple races. Some of the students similarly responded “I don’t have a preference, I would adopt any child who needed a home”! Reflecting on the student’s responses, the researcher found all the points to be valid; but the researcher also felt as though, adopting a child who was a different race than your own, you could expose this child to a new culture, customs and values, and you could also learn more about that child’s culture, customs, and values.

A similar statistically relationship was found when Providence College students were asked, what age group would they prefer to adopt. When the students were asked, “How likely is age a factor when considering adoption?” 38% of the students responded likely, which was the highest percentage among the students surveyed. The researcher then went on to ask the students, “What age group would you prefer to adopt?” 62% of the students chose Newborn. These two percentages were able to support the researcher’s hypothesis. Newborn children had the highest percentage of the students surveyed. Based on the responses of the students surveyed, the researcher found that students felt that adopting a child from newborn would be more adaptable not only for the family, but for the child as well. They felt as though, an adoptive family would

be able to raise the child as their own, and have a new fresh start with a newborn, verses a child being adopted in their teenage years. The researcher was not surprised with the responses from the students surveyed, as their responses aligned with the Literature that was found.

Conclusion

The researcher found that the Providence College students surveyed, were able to reflect on adoption, and they were able to think from the prospective of an adoptive parent, which was something they never consider. Some limitations to the study would be the gender, race, and knowledge of the Providence College students. The sample group of males vs. females in the study was not equal. Not having an equal sample group of males and females may have affected the decision of how likely the student was to adopt a female or male child, since a greater amount of females took the survey. The researcher also found that their population surveyed was not very diverse. Not having a diverse population may have affected the percentage of the student's interest in adopting a race similar to their own. If the population was diverse, the researcher may have collected different results. Also for the students completing the survey, the researcher never asked about the students' knowledge based on adoption, which may have affected their response to the Likert-like scale questions if they knew prior about adoption. A future study question could have been asking about knowledge of adoption. This would have ensured that the participants had background information about adoption, and they could better complete the survey. Despite the limitations the researcher found, there was additional responses to the Likert-like questions that was interesting to reflect on.

Although students would more likely chose a race that is similar to their own, it was surprising to see what race they thought was more likely to be adopted. Of the 100 students surveyed, 40% responded that they thought Asian children would more likely to be adopted. The

researcher was not sure if the students responded that way because of various stereotypes, own experiences, or just assumptions. Based on the research, students would be interested to know that “Most of the children awaiting adoption in the nation’s public child welfare agencies are African American”, which could possibly change their response to that question (Roberts, p. 42, 2006). The researcher was quite surprised, but was filled with joy to the student’s response to “How likely are you to change your preference of adoptee, if your original preference wasn’t available?” The researcher was sure that of the student’s surveyed less than half would less likely change their preference. The researcher was proven wrong. Of the 100 students surveyed, 39% of them said that they would likely change their preference.

Moving forward, if these students were to consider adoption, it was great to know that they would explore additional races, age groups, and genders if their original preference was not available in order to help children in need. I feel as though students found out that as an adoptive parent, you could help the child adequately adapt to their new environment, and home, and ensure that they receive love, security, and stability no matter the race, age, or gender of the child. The researcher was able to gain knowledge of some future implications for Social Workers in practice, research, and education. For practice, learning more about adoption, and the limitations that preferences has on those being adopted, can help figure out a way to stray adoptive parents away from having preferences such as a specific race, age, or gender of a possible adoptee. The researcher found that adoptive parents having preferences of an adoptee, and wanting to adopt the “perfect” child, affects the work of helping those children find a successful home, in a timely fashion. As rising Social Workers in the practice field, we could help advocate and support these children domestically, awaiting adoption, and make adoptive parents aware, that any child awaiting adoption is the perfect child for them. For Social Work

research, more studies should be done to identify other variables affecting the decline in adoption, and ways to successfully move forward from this decline. Additional research could also help others become aware of adoption. For Social Work education, students need to learn more about adoption, and ways that they could help educate themselves, and others. If students are educated on adoption, they would know what steps are necessary to find safe, stable, and loving homes for the children that need it the most.

Appendix

How likely are you to adopt domestically?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid More Likely	13	13.0	13.0	13.0
Likely	35	35.0	35.0	48.0
Somewhat	41	41.0	41.0	89.0
Less Likely	5	5.0	5.0	94.0
Not Likely	5	5.0	5.0	99.0
7.00	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

How likely are you to adopt internationally?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid More Likely	13	13.0	13.0	13.0
Likely	29	29.0	29.0	42.0
Somewhat	35	35.0	35.0	77.0
Less Likely	12	12.0	12.0	89.0
Not Likely	11	11.0	11.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

How likely are you to adopt a female child?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid More Likely	11	11.0	11.0	11.0
Likely	35	35.0	35.0	46.0
Somewhat	38	38.0	38.0	84.0
Less Likely	10	10.0	10.0	94.0
Not Likely	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

How old are you?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18.00	13	13.0	13.0	13.0
19.00	15	15.0	15.0	28.0
20.00	36	36.0	36.0	64.0
Valid 21.00	30	30.0	30.0	94.0
22.00	5	5.0	5.0	99.0
23.00	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

How likely is age a factor when considering adoption?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
More Likely	32	32.0	32.0	32.0
Likely	38	38.0	38.0	70.0
Valid Somewhat	20	20.0	20.0	90.0
Less Likely	3	3.0	3.0	93.0
Not Likely	7	7.0	7.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

What age group do you think is most likely to be adopted?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Newborn	56	56.0	56.0	56.0
1-5 years old	35	35.0	35.0	91.0
5-8 years old	3	3.0	3.0	94.0
Valid 16-18+ years old	2	2.0	2.0	96.0
Multiple	3	3.0	3.0	99.0
7.00	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

How likely are you to consider adoption in the future?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid More Likely	10	10.0	10.0	10.0
Likely	19	19.0	19.0	29.0
Somewhat	43	43.0	43.0	72.0
Less Likely	16	16.0	16.0	88.0
Not Likely	11	11.0	11.0	99.0
Don't Know	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

What age group would you prefer to adopt?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Newborn	62	62.0	62.0	62.0
1-5 years old	32	32.0	32.0	94.0
5-8 years old	4	4.0	4.0	98.0
Multiple	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

What gender are you?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Female	84	84.0	84.0	84.0
Male	16	16.0	16.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Are you or do you know anyone who has been adopted?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	80	80.0	80.0	80.0
No	20	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Do you plan on having children/Do you have children?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	95	95.0	95.0	95.0
	No	5	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

What major are you?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Business	24	24.0	24.0	24.0
	Social Work	8	8.0	8.0	32.0
	Biology	8	8.0	8.0	40.0
	Education	8	8.0	8.0	48.0
	Sociology	7	7.0	7.0	55.0
	Political Science	6	6.0	6.0	61.0
	Math	5	5.0	5.0	66.0
	PSP	4	4.0	4.0	70.0
	English	5	5.0	5.0	75.0
	Undeclared	6	6.0	6.0	81.0
	History	2	2.0	2.0	83.0
	HPM	9	9.0	9.0	92.0
	Spanish	1	1.0	1.0	93.0
	Psychology	3	3.0	3.0	96.0
	Physics	1	1.0	1.0	97.0
	Global Studies	2	2.0	2.0	99.0
	Art History	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

How likely are you to change your preference of adoptee, if your original preference wasn't available?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	More Likely	18	18.0	18.0	18.0
	Likely	39	39.0	39.0	57.0

Somewhat	28	28.0	28.0	85.0
Less Likely	10	10.0	10.0	95.0
Not Likely	4	4.0	4.0	99.0
7.00	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

What race are you?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Caucasian	73	73.0	73.0	73.0
African American	22	22.0	22.0	95.0
Valid Hispanic	4	4.0	4.0	99.0
Asian	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

How likely are you to adopt a child that is the same race as yourself?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
More Likely	25	25.0	25.0	25.0
Likely	39	39.0	39.0	64.0
Valid Somewhat	26	26.0	26.0	90.0
Less Likely	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

How likely are you to adopt a child who is a different race than you?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
More Likely	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
Likely	34	34.0	34.0	41.0
Valid Somewhat	44	44.0	44.0	85.0
Less Likely	12	12.0	12.0	97.0
Not Likely	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

What race would you be interested in adopting?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	African American	17	17.0	17.0	17.0
	Hispanic	7	7.0	7.0	24.0
	Caucasian	34	34.0	34.0	58.0
	Asian	15	15.0	15.0	73.0
	Other	5	5.0	5.0	78.0
	Multiple	21	21.0	21.0	99.0
	Don't Know	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

What race are you generally less likely to adopt?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	More Likely	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
	Likely	20	20.0	20.0	27.0
	Somewhat	12	12.0	12.0	39.0
	Less Likely	15	15.0	15.0	54.0
	Not Likely	32	32.0	32.0	86.0
	6.00	12	12.0	12.0	98.0
	7.00	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

What race do you think is most likely to be adopted?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	African American	13	13.0	13.0	13.0
	Hispanic	3	3.0	3.0	16.0
	Caucasian	32	32.0	32.0	48.0
	Asian	40	40.0	40.0	88.0
	Other	3	3.0	3.0	91.0
	All	6	6.0	6.0	97.0
	7.00	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

What major are you?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Business	24	24.0	24.0	24.0
Social Work	8	8.0	8.0	32.0
Biology	8	8.0	8.0	40.0
Education	8	8.0	8.0	48.0
Sociology	7	7.0	7.0	55.0
Political Science	6	6.0	6.0	61.0
Math	5	5.0	5.0	66.0
PSP	4	4.0	4.0	70.0
English	5	5.0	5.0	75.0
Undeclared	6	6.0	6.0	81.0
History	2	2.0	2.0	83.0
HPM	9	9.0	9.0	92.0
Spanish	1	1.0	1.0	93.0
Psychology	3	3.0	3.0	96.0
Physics	1	1.0	1.0	97.0
Global Studies	2	2.0	2.0	99.0
Art History	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

How likely are you to consider adoption in the future?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid More Likely	10	10.0	10.0	10.0
Likely	19	19.0	19.0	29.0
Somewhat	43	43.0	43.0	72.0
Less Likely	16	16.0	16.0	88.0
Not Likely	11	11.0	11.0	99.0
Don't Know	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

What race would you be interested in adopting?

What gender are you?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Female	Valid	African American	16	19.0	19.0	19.0
		Hispanic	6	7.1	7.1	26.2
		Caucasian	24	28.6	28.6	54.8
		Asian	14	16.7	16.7	71.4
		Other	3	3.6	3.6	75.0
		Multiple	20	23.8	23.8	98.8
		Don't Know	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
		Total	84	100.0	100.0	
Male	Valid	African American	1	6.3	6.3	6.3
		Hispanic	1	6.3	6.3	12.5
		Caucasian	10	62.5	62.5	75.0
		Asian	1	6.3	6.3	81.3
		Other	2	12.5	12.5	93.8
		Multiple	1	6.3	6.3	100.0
		Total	16	100.0	100.0	

How likely are you to adopt a child who is a different race than you?

What gender are you?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Female	Valid	More Likely	6	7.1	7.1	7.1
		Likely	31	36.9	36.9	44.0
		Somewhat	38	45.2	45.2	89.3
		Less Likely	7	8.3	8.3	97.6
		Not Likely	2	2.4	2.4	100.0
		Total	84	100.0	100.0	
Male	Valid	More Likely	1	6.3	6.3	6.3
		Likely	3	18.8	18.8	25.0
		Somewhat	6	37.5	37.5	62.5
		Less Likely	5	31.3	31.3	93.8
		Not Likely	1	6.3	6.3	100.0
		Total	16	100.0	100.0	

What age group would you prefer to adopt?

What gender are you?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Female	Valid	Newborn	52	61.9	61.9	61.9
		1-5 years old	27	32.1	32.1	94.0
		5-8 years old	3	3.6	3.6	97.6
		Multiple	2	2.4	2.4	100.0
		Total	84	100.0	100.0	
Male	Valid	Newborn	10	62.5	62.5	62.5
		1-5 years old	5	31.3	31.3	93.8
		5-8 years old	1	6.3	6.3	100.0
		Total	16	100.0	100.0	

How likely is age a factor when considering adoption?

What gender are you?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Female	Valid	More Likely	26	31.0	31.0	31.0
		Likely	35	41.7	41.7	72.6
		Somewhat	18	21.4	21.4	94.0
		Less Likely	1	1.2	1.2	95.2
		Not Likely	4	4.8	4.8	100.0
		Total	84	100.0	100.0	
Male	Valid	More Likely	6	37.5	37.5	37.5
		Likely	3	18.8	18.8	56.3
		Somewhat	2	12.5	12.5	68.8
		Less Likely	2	12.5	12.5	81.3
		Not Likely	3	18.8	18.8	100.0
		Total	16	100.0	100.0	

What race are you?

What gender are you?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Female	Valid	Caucasian	59	70.2	70.2	70.2
		African American	20	23.8	23.8	94.0
		Hispanic	4	4.8	4.8	98.8
		Asian	1	1.2	1.2	100.0

		Total	84	100.0	100.0	
		Caucasian	14	87.5	87.5	87.5
Male	Valid	African American	2	12.5	12.5	100.0
		Total	16	100.0	100.0	

How likely are you to adopt a child that is the same race as yourself?

What gender are you?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
		More Likely	19	22.6	22.6
		Likely	33	39.3	61.9
Female	Valid	Somewhat	22	26.2	88.1
		Less Likely	10	11.9	100.0
		Total	84	100.0	100.0
		More Likely	6	37.5	37.5
Male	Valid	Likely	6	37.5	75.0
		Somewhat	4	25.0	100.0
		Total	16	100.0	100.0

What age group do you think is most likely to be adopted?

What gender are you?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
		Newborn	47	56.0	56.0
		1-5 years old	28	33.3	89.3
		5-8 years old	3	3.6	92.9
Female	Valid	16-18+ years old	2	2.4	95.2
		Multiple	3	3.6	98.8
		7.00	1	1.2	100.0
		Total	84	100.0	100.0
		Newborn	9	56.3	56.3
Male	Valid	1-5 years old	7	43.8	100.0
		Total	16	100.0	100.0

How likely are you to consider adoption in the future?

What gender are you?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	Valid	More Likely	9	10.7	10.7
		Likely	18	21.4	32.1

		Somewhat	38	45.2	45.2	77.4
		Less Likely	10	11.9	11.9	89.3
		Not Likely	8	9.5	9.5	98.8
		Don't Know	1	1.2	1.2	100.0
		Total	84	100.0	100.0	
		More Likely	1	6.3	6.3	6.3
		Likely	1	6.3	6.3	12.5
Male	Valid	Somewhat	5	31.3	31.3	43.8
		Less Likely	6	37.5	37.5	81.3
		Not Likely	3	18.8	18.8	100.0
		Total	16	100.0	100.0	

How likely are you to change your preference of adoptee, if your original preference wasn't available?

What gender are you?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
		More Likely	14	16.7	16.7
		Likely	36	42.9	59.5
		Somewhat	21	25.0	84.5
Female	Valid	Less Likely	10	11.9	96.4
		Not Likely	2	2.4	98.8
		7.00	1	1.2	100.0
		Total	84	100.0	100.0
		More Likely	4	25.0	25.0
		Likely	3	18.8	43.8
Male	Valid	Somewhat	7	43.8	87.5
		Not Likely	2	12.5	100.0
		Total	16	100.0	100.0

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Gender _____

Age _____

Race _____

Major _____

1. Do you plan on having children/Do you have children?

**Duration of this survey pick what option would appeal to you despite not interested in having children in the future*

-----|-----|-----
 Yes No

2. How likely are you to adopt a male child?

-----|-----|-----|-----|-----
 More Likely Likely Somewhat Less Likely Not Likely

3. How likely is age a factor when considering adoption?

-----|-----|-----|-----|-----
 More Likely Likely Somewhat Less Likely Not Likely

4. What age group would you prefer to adopt?

-----|-----|-----|-----|-----
 Newborn 1 -5 years old 5-8 years old 8-16 years old 16-18+ years old

5. How likely are you to adopt a child who is a different race than you?

-----|-----|-----|-----|-----
 More Likely Likely Somewhat Less Likely Not Likely

6. How likely are you to adopt domestically?

-----|-----|-----|-----|-----
 More Likely Likely Somewhat Less Likely Not Likely

7. What race would you be interested in adopting?

-----|-----|-----|-----|-----
 African American Hispanic Caucasian Asian Other

8. How likely are you to adopt a female child?

-----|-----|-----|-----|-----
 More Likely Likely Somewhat Less Likely Not Likely

9. How likely are you to adopt internationally?

-----|-----|-----|-----|-----
 More Likely Likely Somewhat Less Likely Not Likely

10. What race are you generally less likely to adopt?

-----|-----|-----|-----|-----
 African American Hispanic Caucasian Asian Other

11. How likely are you to adopt a child that is the same race as yourself?

-----|-----|-----|-----|-----
 More Likely Likely Somewhat Less Likely Not Likely

12. What race do you think is most likely to be adopted?

-----|-----|-----|-----|-----
 African American Hispanic Caucasian Asian Other

13. What age group do you think is most likely to be adopted?

-----|-----|-----|-----|-----
 Newborn 1 -5 years old 5-8 years old 8-16 years old 16-18+ years old

14. Are you or do you know anyone who has been adopted?

-----|-----|-----
 Yes No

15. How likely are you to consider adoption in the future?

-----|-----|-----|-----|-----
 More Likely Likely Somewhat Less Likely Not Likely

16. How likely are you to change your preference of adoptee, if your original preference wasn't available?

-----|-----|-----|-----|-----
 More Likely Likely Somewhat Less Likely Not Likely

Consent Form

Dear Potential Participant:

We are students at Providence College, inviting you to participate in a study about adoption preferences in regards to age, race, and gender, among college students. Knowledge of this relationship can be useful in various helping professions, such as social work. Data gathered in this study will be reported in a thesis paper for use solely in a Social Work Theory Capstone course at Providence College.

Presently, undergraduate students from the Providence College community are being recruited for this study. Participation will involve filling out a questionnaire. Total participation time should not exceed five minutes.

There are no anticipated risks associated with involvement in this research study. Participants are free to decline participation in this study.

Benefits of participation in this study include assisting researchers' understanding of the decline in adoption due to certain preferences of the adoptive parents, as well as contributing to the general knowledge about these topics that may aid in future work with others. There is no other anticipated compensation.

Collecting forms in a way that ensures there will be no way of identifying the participant will protect anonymity.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and the decision to participate or decline will not influence your relationship with the interviewers or the Department of Social Work in any way. If you have additional questions, please contact any researcher listed below.

YOUR RETURN OF A COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE INFORMATION AND THAT YOU HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Thank you for participating in this study.

D'Nique Stevens, Social Work Student, dstevens@friars.providence.edu